

To: The Senate Health and Welfare Committee

From: Falko Schilling on behalf of the Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Re: FY 2019 Budget Priorities

Date: 3/26/18

I want to offer the following thoughts on priorities in the FY 2019 budget on behalf the Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A).

We appreciate the House's decision to include a 2% increase for Home and Community Based providers in the Choices for Care Program in their proposed budget. We hope the Senate will agree to the House's proposal. Home and Community Based Providers are the core of the Choices for Care program, yet they do not receive reasonable annual rate increases for their services. Pay inequity is reducing Older Vermonters ability to receive care in Home and Community Based settings. Vermont statutes require reasonable annual rate increases for nursing home based providers, but do not provide this same automatic increase to Home and Community Based providers. We request that the Senate include a 2% increase for Home and Community Based Providers, as well as the language found in H.284 that would require reasonable annual increases for these providers

We also request that the Senate fund home delivered meals in the Choices for Care program in the FY 2019 budget. Vermont currently covers the cost of meals for Choices for Care participants in nursing homes but does not cover the cost of meals for participants who receive services at home. In 2017 the state estimated it could cover every Choices for Care participant who currently receives home delivered meals for approximately \$190,000.ⁱ This investment could provide an additional 76,822 meals for older Vermonters in need and draw down an additional \$233,000 in federal funds to the state.

We also support the House's decision to codify language regarding savings in the Choices for Care program. This language is largely based on proposed language from the Agency of Human Services with modifications proposed by the House Human Services Committee. We request the Senate concur with the House's proposal to include this language in the budget.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

ⁱ <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/H.875-HDM-CFC-Legislative-Reportcg-DRAFT-SHandCG-edits.pdf>